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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of teacher capacity building in the Dallas Reading Plan, a 5-year, systemic reform initiative committed to enhancing students' reading achievement, emphasizing the redesigned Reading Academy, a trainer of trainers delivery system that supported educators' knowledge acquisition. Implementation and outcome data were collected for 144 elementary schools throughout the 1997-98 school year, during which time teachers, principals, librarians, and aides received training. The study investigated: the nature of the delivery system and training model; the extent to which training impacted participants' knowledge and classroom practices; the extent to which students' reading achievement changed as a result of reform initiatives; and how the Reading Academy was redesigned to meet participants' needs. Data collection included classroom observations, surveys of teachers and principals, student academic achievement data (from the district database), and focus groups. Participants rated the training highly. The training model enabled most teachers to receive a consistent message on critical instructional methods. Teachers integrated many of the instructional methods into classroom practice. There was considerable variance in the quality of instruction delivered by individual teachers. Student reading outcomes declined from first to third grade. (Contains 33 references.) (SM)

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Challenges for Literacy Instruction: The Role of Teacher Capacity Building in the Dallas Reading Plan

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Challenges for Literacy Instruction: The Role of Teacher Capacity Building in the Dallas Reading Plan

Researchers often cite t*eacher capacity building* as a key component of systemic reform (e.g., Fullen, 1996; Steigelbauer, 1994). Strategies for building capacity may rely on innovative professional development approaches such as dialogue within professional communities, experiments with new materials and assessments, coaching, peer observations, or ongoing staff development involving teacher leaders (e.g., Floden, Goertz, & O'Day, 1995; Fullan, 1996; Sykes, 1996). Hoff (1998), writing for *Education Week*, states that both class size reductions and teacher improvement are often cited by scholars as mechanisms for school reform. Further, a recent report issued by the U.S. National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) stressed the importance of teachers and teacher training in providing quality education. The report points out that *teacher expertise* is the single most important factor in determining student achievement, and that teachers must have access to high quality professional development.

Similar concerns are echoed in the political arena. In California, Democratic Governor Davis is proposing a 250 million-dollar teacher retraining program that includes training followed by coaching, demonstration lessons, and mentoring by master teachers during the school year. If implemented, it would be the largest teacher training program initiated since the 1960's. Other states, including Georgia, Alabama, and Texas, are similarly planning massive teacher retraining (Pipho, 1999). Teachers and professional groups reiterate these issues. At their annual meetings, both the National Educational

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Association and the American Federation of Teachers cited the lack of connected professional development for teachers.

Professional development concerns involve an administrative component as well. When teachers were asked what they felt they needed to implement standards-based curricula, they noted administrative support and knowledge as "critical" (Bay, Reys, & Reys, 1999). In an article titled, *Why State Mandates Don't Work*, Kelly relates that the element that is most needed is training at all levels and that substantive change will not occur without the training of leaders (1999). At the Annenburg Institute for School Reform, they have identified seven core beliefs about the professional development of principals. Central to these core beliefs is that the traditional one to three day workshop format is not productive in leadership behavior and knowledge change and that principals must be provided rigorous, on-going training which provokes questioning of assumptions and practice (Evans & Mohr, 1999).

Other researchers have identified staff development characteristics that relate to student achievement. A spokesperson for the Consortium for Policy Research in America asserts that student academic achievement is enhanced when teachers have on-the-job training in subjects that they teach. William Schmidt, the research coordinator for the Third International Mathematics and Science Study criticized current "generic" staff development efforts and noted that the top-scoring nations gear teacher professional development to the grade and content of their practice (Bradley, 1999). Fashola and Slavin (1998) identified characteristics of urban school interventions that resulted in

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increased student achievement. Those interventions were characterized by extensive professional development with extensive classroom follow-up from expert peer coaches. Teachers were allowed to continually adjust instruction as well as meet with other practitioners for discussion and problem solving. Correspondingly, support for coaching (Gersten, Morvant, & Brengelman, 1995; Huberman, 1990; Naylor, 1991; Pajak, 1993; Wineburg & Grossman, 1998) and team and consensus building (Bentz & Bentz, 1990; Covey, 1989; Senge, 1990) are well researched as to effectiveness in improving practice and related outcomes.

Literacy instruction is addressed in the recently released book, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (National Research Council, 1998). There is a call for research to assist school systems to develop and use data-driven decisions in curriculum and ongoing staff development. Findings suggest that current practices in staff development lack quality content, systematic classroom follow-up, and seem to be characterized as "one-shot" training (p. 331). The conclusion is that "teachers require ongoing inservice staff development to absorb the new information about reading and reading instruction" (p. 331). Power (1999) asks why educators and leaders do not study the state of Maine—the state that currently ranks number one in the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reporting. While demographics is certainly a factor to consider in the ranking, Maine also has had a fifteen year sustained effort in staff development based on literacy research and innovation.

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To put it briefly, according to Strong, Silver, and Perrini (1999), there are two factors in professional development efficacy—simple and deep. Simple is defined as instruction that is not revolutionary, not in overt conflict with current practice, and respectful of the nature of the school structure and resources. Deep is defined as instruction that is inclusive of all stakeholders, allowing of diversity, and evolving with time, reflection, and feedback. The challenge for literacy instruction is to find innovative ways to mobilize large numbers of educators toward deep, lasting change.

The Dallas Reading Plan

Meeting students' literacy needs is a monumental challenge in Dallas as well as in other urban districts. Motivated to have a long-term impact on illiteracy, the *Dallas Reading Plan* outlines a five-year, systemic reform initiative committed to enhancing students' reading achievement. The long-term goal is for "all children in the Dallas Public Schools to achieve grade level reading in the language of instruction by the end of third grade. The formidable task in the early grades involves 144 elementary schools (88% of which are Title I schoolwide programs), over 56,000 K-3 students who are predominately minority and economically deprived, and more than 3,000 teachers with varying credentials and abilities. Currently, approximately 70% of 6,300 tested third graders read below grade-level expectations. In line with current research, the district's approach to advancing student achievement relies on teacher capacity building rather than the adoption and implementation of particular reading programs. District program evaluation data show that a plethora of existing reading programs, by and large, have

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produced little or no "value added" impact on student reading achievement. Furthermore, classroom observational studies document the need for a shift from predominately teacher-centered, whole-class reading instruction to a more student-centered, personalized approach (Shapley, 1996; Shapley & Bush, 1997).

Components of Dallas' reading plan address principles of balanced literacy, targeted instruction for students at risk, student and family support, ongoing assessment, and a delivery system for staff training. Balanced literacy is a comprehensive plan for reading instruction that is linguistically appropriate for all students and is achieved through (a) benchmarks or grade-level proficiencies that establish what students should be able to do, (b) well-defined instructional methods, and (c) materials and technology that support learning. Because the success of the reading plan hinges on effective instruction that supports student learning, a key element is the delivery system and training model that supports educators' knowledge acquisition (i.e., the Reading Academy). Quality management provides the driving force for achieving the plan's long-term goal. Comprehensive reform relies on clearly articulated leadership roles, effective implementation, and systematic evaluation that ensures the quality and continuous improvement of the district's efforts. Formative evaluation data, in particular, measure progress toward goals and inform choices of program strategies, the assignment of priorities, as well as procedural design and development (Dallas Public Schools, 1997).

Purpose

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In the second year of the five-year reading reform effort (1997-98), formative evaluation data were collected and reported throughout the year to guide discussions about effective approaches for the delivery of staff training. Based on input from various constituencies, the redesigned Reading Academy provides an innovative professional development model that will be implemented in 1998-99. The objective of this paper is to describe how relevant data informed the design and development of the new professional growth model for staff. More specifically, the study addresses the following questions: (a) What was the nature of the existing delivery system and training model, (b) to what extent did training impact participants' knowledge and classroom practices, (c) to what extent did students' reading achievement change as a result of reform initiatives, and (d) how was the Reading Academy redesigned to meet the needs of principals, teachers, and students?

Method

Implementation and outcome data were accumulated for the components of the Dallas Reading Plan for 144 elementary schools throughout the 1997-98 school year. Data were collected relative to the implementation of the Reading Academy, the quality of training that was provided, the impact of the training on teachers, student achievement outcomes, and the process for redesigning the training model. Attendance forms, rating forms, survey data, and observational data were entered into databases for analysis.

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Reading Academy. The Reading Academy, a trainer-of-trainers delivery system, was the vehicle for staff training in reading and language arts. Training was configured in two phases. In Phase I, 720 Vertical Team (VT) members (i.e., a principal and Grades K-3 teacher representatives from 144 schools) participated in district-level training, and in Phase II, 28 Lead Reading Teachers and VT members delivered on-campus training for approximately 1,600 other teachers. Attendance and rating forms were completed at the conclusion of each of six training sessions from October 1997 to February 1998.

Impact of training. Data regarding training impact were obtained from two surveys and a classroom observational study. First, at the conclusion of a district-level training session in February 1998, a *Vertical Team Survey for Teachers* (N = 473 teachers) and *Vertical Team Principal Survey* (N = 130 principals) were completed. Second, VT and Non-Vertical Team (NVT) comparison groups were formed for an observational study in a sample of classes in grades K, 1, and 3. A two-stage sampling process was used. First, a stratified random sampling yielded approximately 25% of the elementary schools in each subdistrict (39 schools), and second, a stratified sample of approximately 20% of kindergarten, first-, and third-grade classes was selected (including regular English, ESL, and bilingual classes). The final sample (N=117 classes) included a representative balance of VT and NVT teachers for each of the three grade levels. The district's Program Observation Form provided a synopsis of the learning activities and events that occurred during an observation. (See Appendix A.) Four-hour orientation sessions were held to train 35 observers (25 LRTs and 10 program evaluators) to use the observation instrument consistently. Classroom observations were conducted from

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January to March 1998 during reading/language arts instruction to assess the implementation of Reading Academy training content and methods.

Student achievement. Student achievement data, obtained from the district database, included reading outcomes for the *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills* (*ITBS*, Grades K-3) and *Spanish Assessment of Basic Skills (SABE*, Grades 1-3). Student outcomes for reading comprehension were reported as Normal Curve Equivalents (NCEs), Grade Equivalents (Ges), and percentiles. For group comparisons, analysis of covariance indicated the level of achievement after controlling for gender, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, and prior achievement.

Redesign and development. Intermittently during the school year, focus groups and committees met to review data, to assess the current status, and to formulate plans for the design and development of a modified Reading Academy. Descriptive notes and artifacts were collected from the sessions. Under the direction of the *Dallas Reading Plan* Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Robert Cooter, input was derived from the reading department, central administration, the Principal's Advisory Committee, a business and community Steering Committee, as well as deans and professors from five partner universities in the region (University of North Texas, Southern Methodist University, University of Texas at Arlington, Texas Woman's University, and Texas A & M at Commerce).

Results

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Implementation-Year 2, 1997-98. The Reading Academy training model was designed to give teachers ongoing instruction in best practices and proven methodologies in reading. Training was delivered through a trainer-of-trainers model that required Lead Reading Teachers (LRTs) and Vertical Teams (VTs) to acquire expertise in instructional methods and presentation skills in order to transfer skills and information to other professionals at each of the elementary campuses. The configurations and roles are described below:

Vertical Teams. The Vertical Team was comprised of the principal and four teachers (one each from grades K-3). VT members (N=720) provided training and continuous follow up at the school level to increase all teachers' understanding and commitment to balanced learning.

Lead Reading Teachers. Twenty-eight LRTs supported reading instruction at the 144 elementary schools—the LRT-to-campus ratio was approximately 1:5. At each campus, LRTs interacted with VT members, facilitated training and study-group sessions, served as mentors or peer coaches for all K-3 teachers, conducted demonstration lessons, facilitated study groups, assisted with instructional planning, established Literacy Materials Centers, and provided other services at the principal's request.

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In the first year of the reading plan (1996-97), a similar trainer-of-trainers model was implemented. The major difference was this: VT members had the primary responsibility for delivering school-level training. Unfortunately, first-year implementation outcomes showed that campus-based training sessions seldom occurred. For that reason, the trainer-of-trainers model was reconfigured in the second year. As a result, the LRTs led the campus-level training with assistance from the VT teachers. As shown in Figure 1, training sessions in Year 2 were configured in two *phases* and three *modules*.

Phases referred to the means by which the program content was delivered. In Phase I, VT members were trained by LRTs and other reading experts. In Phase II, other K-3 teachers in Title I schools were trained in half-day, condensed sessions. *Modules A, B, C* represented topics related to reading that provided the focus for training. Module A, training featured sessions on balanced reading, Literacy Materials Centers, read alouds, and peer coaching techniques to build capacity in campus-level leaders for Phase II training. Module B focused on whole-to-part skills instruction, multilingual/multicultural perspectives, literacy through music, and shared reading. Sessions in Module C addressed basal reader programs, musical literacy, and innovative basal lessons.

1997-98 Reading Academy

Figure 1. Delivery and training model for the 1997-98 *Dallas Reading Plan*.

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Quality of training. Six training sessions, three each for Phases I and II, were conducted from October 1997 to March 1998. Vertical Team training sessions were conducted at a central location in Dallas, whereas various arrangements were utilized to facilitate the time and location for the school-level training. Altogether, 18 hours of district-level training and 9 hours of school-based training were delivered. Evaluation outcomes showed that Phase I training sessions (mean number of participants = 649) and Phase II training sessions (mean number of participants = 1,575) were well attended. In addition to VT members, some district- and school-level specialists attended the training. Evaluation forms completed at the end of each session asked participants to rate the training on 12 items addressing the quality of the presenters, content, organization, utility, appropriateness, applicability, as well as the overall quality of the training. Results showed that the training sessions were rated highly by nearly all participants with mean item ratings ranging from 3.6 to 3.7 on a 4-point scale. The ratings for Phase I and Phase II training sessions were comparable.

Impact of Training on Teacher Knowledge and Classroom Practice

Data regarding the impact of the training on teacher knowledge and classroom practice came from three sources: the *Vertical Team Teacher Survey* conducted at the final district-level training session in February 1998, a *Principal Survey* conducted in February 1998, and classroom observations conducted from January to March 1998.

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Vertical Team Teacher Survey. A survey of VT teachers conducted at the final training session indicated that the Reading Academy training positively impacted their instructional practices. Based on responses from 458 teachers, the majority judged their ability to implement read alouds, shared reading, and whole-to-part skills lessons as "good" to "excellent." Further, almost all of the teachers reported that they "sometimes" or "often" used the instructional strategies in their classrooms. Teachers, however, were less optimistic about their ability to use cognitive coaching strategies with their peers. They rated their ability as "fair" to "good," but the majority indicated that other teachers "never" (29%), "rarely" (32%), or only "sometimes" (31%) observed lessons in their classroom. In short, the training appeared effective for VT teachers, but the cognitive coaching role envisioned for VT teachers was not implemented effectively at the campus level.

Vertical Team Principal Survey. One part of the principal survey asked for respondents' perceptions, based on classroom observations, of instructional changes in VT and Non-Vertical Team (NVT) teachers' classrooms since the beginning of the reading initiative. Findings are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Principals' Observations of Teachers' Instructional Methods

	Vertical	Non-Vertical

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Item/Responses	Team Teachers N	%	Team Teachers N	%
Based on your classroom observations since the beginning of the reading initiative, which is most true of your teachers?				
My teachers' teaching methods have not changed.[a]	4	3%	13	11%
There have been some modifications in teachers' methods.[a]	67	53%	87	73%
There have been significant modifications in teachers' methods.[a]	55	44%	19	16%
I am unable to make this assessment.[b]	4	3%	11	9%

What modifications or changes have taken place?

Instructional methods/materials: Language-to-Literacy Charts, small-group instruction, guided reading, read alouds, shared reading, word walls, instructional level reading, diagnostic assessment (Running Records), centers, graphic organizers, skills (phonics, phonemic awareness).

Teacher reflection and relationships: Open to new beliefs, ideas, methods; sharing, collaborating discussing.

Student engagement: Writing, journals, student-teacher interactions, enjoyment/excitement about reading, more reading (independent, with peers, home).

Note. Number of principals responding to the survey = 130. Response rate = 90%.

[a]Percents based on the number of principals rating teachers' methods (VT, N=126; NVT, N=119).

[b]Percents based on the number of principals responding to the survey (N=130).

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Results showed that the majority of principals believed there were some modifications (53%) or significant modifications (44%) in VT teachers' methods as a result of the training. For NVT teachers, some modifications were evident (73%), but few teachers made significant changes (16%). Principals cited changes related to teachers' instructional methods and materials, enhanced teacher reflection about reading practices, stronger collegial relationships among teachers, and higher student engagement in learning. In almost all cases, VT teachers showed a greater degree of change than their lesser-trained, NVT counterparts. Based on the instructional methods cited by principals, it was clear that many teachers were using or attempting to use many of the instructional strategies that were the focus of the district- and school-level training. Numerous principals emphasized that teachers were "beginning," "attempting," "trying", "working on" new approaches. They indicated, however, that teachers "were not where they need to be yet." Teachers, it seemed, "need more time to internalize new ways of teaching." Some principals stressed that "more training is needed." In sum, there was evidence that the Reading Academy training positively impacted teachers' practices, but more intensive professional development will be required to deliver consistently effective reading instruction.

Classroom observations. The third source of evidence about training impact was classroom observational data. A two-stage sampling process was used to select a stratified random sample consisting of approximately 25% of the district's elementary schools (N=39), and from that sample, a stratified sample of approximately 20% of the

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kindergarten, first-, and third-grade classes (including regular English, ESL, and bilingual classes) was selected for observation at each school. The final sample (N = 117 classes) included observations conducted in VT and NVT kindergarten (n = 32; [VT = 10, NVT = 22]), Grade 1 (n = 44; [VT = 13, NVT = 31]), and Grade 3 (n = 41; [VT = 10, NVT = 31]). Classes were observed during periods of reading and language arts instruction from January to March 1998 using the Program Observation Record shown in Appendix A. Each teacher had one week advance notice, and observers spent approximately 30 to 45 minutes observing, writing descriptive notes, and recording codes for instructional configurations, teaching activities, student activities, as well as reading/language arts content and strategies. Criterion-referenced interrater agreement of the instrument is 77% for the teacher activities, 80% for the student activities, and 79% overall (Shapley and Bush, 1997).

Data in Table 2 show the instructional and learning characteristics of the grades K, 1, 3 reading/language classes. Comparisons are made for VT and NVT teachers. Data from the observation form yielded mean percentages of time allocated for 3 categories of instructional configurations, 8 categories of teaching activities, and 11 categories of student activities.

Instructional configuration. The mean percentages of time were allocated for whole class, small group/pairs, and independent/individual activities are compared in Table 2. There was little difference in the configurations used by VT and NVT teachers, but configurations varied by grade level. Surprisingly, kindergarten instructional time

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was predominantly whole class (VT = 87%, NVT = 84%). In contrast, teachers in first- and third-grade classes relied on a combination of whole class (59% to 66%), small group (27% to 29%), and independent (9% to 14%) instruction. The instructional configurations used in first- and third-grade showed a marked change from the predominantly whole-group instruction that was observed in district classes in 1996 (Shapley, 1996).

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Table 2

Mean Percent of Time Given to Instructional Configurations, Teaching Activities, and Student Activities

	Kindergarten		Grade 1		Grade 3	
	VT	NVT	VT	NVT	VT	NVT
	N = 10	N = 22	N = 13	N = 31	N = 10	N = 31
Configuration/Grouping						
Whole class	86.5	84.0	61.6	60.3	65.5	58.5
Small group/pairs	10.7	7.8	28.8	29.1	26.8	27.4
Independent/individual	2.6	8.2	9.7	10.4	8.5	13.7
Total	99.8	100.0	99.5	99.7	100.8	99.7
Teaching Activities						
Instructional	89.6	78.6	82.8	84.3	90.8	81.5
–Present content/strategies	*76.4*	*69.5*	*69.4*	*74.8*	*76.7*	*62.4*
–Monitoring seatwork	*8.9*	*9.0*	*10.9*	*8.9*	*12.7*	*17.7*
–One-on-one instruction	*0.0*	*0.1*	*0.7*	*0.4*	*1.4*	*1.4*
–Student presentation	*4.3*	*0.0*	*1.8*	*0.2*	*0.0*	*0.0*
Testing	1.2	2.1	6.3	2.7	3.5	3.2
Non-instructional	9.0	19.3	10.4	12.6	6.5	13.1
Total	99.8	100.0	99.5	99.7	100.8	99.7

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Student Activities						
Listening and responding	48.1	59.0	43.3	56.5	53.5	41.2
Interactive discussion	2.9	1.5	4.8	1.3	8.6	3.8
Reading (oral, choral, silent)	17.7	9.7	13.0	8.4	17.4	14.7
–Oral	*0.0*	*3.1*	*2.0*	*3.2*	*12.6*	*6.7*
–Choral	*17.7*	*5.7*	*10.5*	*4.2*	*1.7*	*4.2*
–Silent	*0.0*	*0.9*	*0.5*	*1.0*	*3.1*	*3.8*
Short-answer exercise	6.4	11.3	10.6	8.9	3.7	16.2
Writing	5.2	2.9	7.4	4.6	7.1	4.6
Active manipulation	6.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.4
Multiple student activities	2.4	3.6	7.8	11.9	6.2	5.0
Computer activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.2	0.0
Non-academic	5.0	9.7	8.9	4.8	2.9	8.5
Other	6.1	2.4	0.3	3.1	0.2	5.5
Total	99.8	100.0	99.5	99.7	100.8	99.7

Note. N=Number of classes observed. Percents may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Teaching activities. All comparison groups devoted from 79% to 91% of class time to instruction, but the instructional emphasis varied. In general, VT teachers spent more time presenting content and developing strategies and had less non-instructional time than their NVT counterparts. In particular, kindergarten and third-grade VT teachers, respectively, spent 7% and 14% more time presenting content and developing strategies. Grades K-3 VT teachers non-instructional time, in order, was 10%, 2%, and 7% less than the NVT comparison group percentages. Time allocations were similar for

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other teaching activities. All teachers spent substantial amounts of time monitoring seatwork (9% to 18%), but one-on-one instruction was seldom used at any grade level (0% to 1%), and testing activities accounted for a limited amount of time (1% to 6%).

Student activities. Across all comparison groups, student time was mainly devoted to listening and responding to teachers (43% to 59%). There were, however, notable differences in the student activities by teacher comparison groups. Kindergarten students in VT teachers' classes spent their time more productively on choral reading, writing, and active manipulation while NVT teachers stressed listening and responding, short-answer exercises, and non-academic activities. Percentages for VT and NVT student activities, in order, were reading (18%, 10%), short-answer exercises (6%, 11%), writing (5%, 3%), active manipulation (6%, 0%), and non-academic (5%, 10%). Student activities were similar for first-grade teachers. Students in VT and NVT classes, respectively, spent time reading (13%, 8%), doing short-answer exercises (11%, 9%), writing (7%, 5%), engaged in multiple activities (8%, 12%) or engaged in non-academic activities (9%, 5%). Third-grade VT teachers' students had considerable time for reading (17%), interactive discussions (9%), writing (7%), and multiple activities (6%). In contrast, NVT teachers' students spent more time on short-answer exercises (16%) and non-academic activities (9%), and somewhat less time reading (15%) and writing (5%).

Subject-related subcodes were used to identify the instructional methods that teachers employed when they presented content and developed strategies during reading/language arts classes. The subcodes, defined in the Appendix B, provided a

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means to determine whether or not teachers utilized the instructional methods emphasized during training. Percentages shown in italics in Table 3 represent the disaggregation of time given to teacher *content presentation and strategy development* by subject-related subcodes. Teachers' content-related emphasis varied according to the grade-level taught. Kindergarten VT teachers implemented balanced reading that stressed skill instruction (27%), developmental comprehension (10%), guided reading (4%), shared reading (15%), and read alouds (5%). In contrast, NVT teachers devoted most of their time to skill instruction (39%) and read alouds (10%). Minimal time was given to developmental comprehension (3%), guided reading (1%), or shared reading (4%). The results for first-grade teachers were puzzling. NVT teachers implemented more balanced instructional methods than the VT comparison group (e.g., developmental comprehension and guided reading). VT and NVT first-grade teachers, respectively focused on skill instruction (19%, 21%), developmental comprehension (4%, 16%), guided reading (6%, 11%), whole-group directed reading (4%, 8%), and read alouds (10%, 13%). VT teachers, however, allocated time for developmental writing (6%) and other types of instruction (11%), but "other" often meant students taking turns reading orally in a whole-class setting. The instructional methods of third-grade teacher comparison groups were similar, but VT teachers allocated more time for valued practices than their lesser-trained peers. VT and NVT teachers, respectively, focused on skills (11%, 19%), developmental comprehension (17%, 13%), guided reading (12%, 7%), whole-group directed reading (7%, 7%), and read alouds (20%, 6%).

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Table 3

Mean Percent of Time Given to "Present Content and Develop Strategies"

by Reading/Language Arts Subcodes

	Kindergarten		Grade 1		Grade 3	
	VT	NVT	VT	NVT	VT	NVT
Teaching Activity	N = 10	N = 22	N = 13	N = 31	N = 10	N = 31
Present content/strategies	76.4	69.5	69.4	74.8	76.7	62.4
–Skill instruction/practice	*27.2*	*39.0*	*18.7*	*20.6*	*10.7*	*18.5*
–Direct Comprehension						
—Procedural	*0.0*	*0.0*	*3.8*	*0.1*	*3.8*	*6.2*
—Developmental	*9.5*	*2.9*	*4.2*	*16.3*	*16.6*	*12.9*
–Directed Reading						
—Guided (small group)	*4.4*	*1.1*	*5.5*	*10.7*	*12.3*	*7.1*
—Shared (small/whole)	*15.4*	*4.4*	*1.4*	*0.0*	*2.8*	*1.1*
—Other (whole group)	*2.5*	*2.3*	*4.2*	*8.3*	*6.5*	*6.5*
–Teacher read aloud	*5.1*	*10.1*	*9.6*	*13.0*	*19.9*	*5.5*
–Independent reading	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.1*	*1.0*	*0.0*
–Developmental writing	*0.0*	*0.6*	*6.3*	*0.3*	*1.6*	*0.2*
–Oral language development	*5.2*	*6.2*	*3.9*	*2.6*	*1.0*	*1.5*
–Other	*6.5*	*3.0*	*11.6*	*2.7*	*0.5*	*2.4*

Note. N=Number of classes observed. Subcategory percents may not sum to "present content/strategies" due to rounding.

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All in all, both groups of teachers implemented many balanced reading methods. In kindergarten and third grade, VT teachers were more innovative than their NVT peers, but NVT first-grade teachers were more inclined toward balanced methods. Across all comparison groups, little time was provided for independent reading, developmental writing, or language development. VT teachers, who received more intensive training, were more apt to utilize small-group guided reading, shared reading, and developmental comprehension strategies, and to allocate more time for student reading. It must be noted, however, that teachers who were selected as VT members were generally experienced, grade-level leaders—thus, they may have been more accomplished teachers before the reading initiative than the NVT comparison group. Nevertheless, narrative descriptions suggested that the quality of instruction varied within both VT and NVT teacher groups. Some teachers in each group effectively implemented balanced learning methods in their classrooms, while others did not. Overall, findings showed that many VT and NVT teachers needed more intensive training and mentoring to move to higher levels of expertise, especially in individualizing instruction, managing small-group instruction, facilitating decoding and reading fluency, and promoting higher-order comprehension.

Student Reading Achievement

This section examines the state of reading achievement in the district. First, comparisons are made between the student achievement of VT and NVT teachers. Next, student outcomes are presented for cohort groups and cross-sectional comparisons are

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made. Finally, the progress toward the goal of "all children reading on grade level by the end of third grade" is shown.

Student outcomes for VT and NVT teachers. Comparisons were made to determine whether or not there were student achievement differences between VT teachers who received more intensive training and NVT teachers. Analysis of covariance provides a useful means to reduce bias when comparisons are made between intact groups by statistically controlling initial differences in the students which might have been present and which might confound differences between the comparison groups. Concomitant variables used to adjust posttest means were prior achievement, ethnicity, gender, English proficiency, and socioeconomic status as measured by free and reduced lunch status. Although this did not eliminate all sources of bias (e.g., previous teacher expertise), it made for a fairer comparison.

Three, two-group univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) designs were used to examine the effect of the level of teacher training on first, second, and third graders' *ITBS* reading comprehension. Comparison groups were VT teachers, who received Phase I and Phase II training, and NVT teachers who participated in Phase II training only. The dependent variable was the 1998 *ITBS* NCE subtest scores for reading comprehension. Prior to each grade-level ANCOVA analysis, the assumption of homogeneity of the regression slopes was verified. Results presented in Table 4 yielded significant main effects for Grade 1 ($F = 22.05$, $df = 1, 5455$, $p<.001$) and Grade 3

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($F = 7.24$, $df = 1, 5987$, $p<.01$). Thus, there were some differences in student achievement by teacher groups.

Table 4

ANCOVA: Comparison of Grades 1-3 *ITBS* Reading Comprehension for Vertical Team and Non-Vertical Team Comparison Groups

Reading	For Vertical Team and Non-Vertical Team Groups				
Comprehension	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*F probability*
Grade 1	7535.21	1/5455	7535.21	22.05	.000***
Grade 2	699.70	1/6158	699.70	2.68	.102
Grade 3	1632.45	1/5987	1632.45	7.24	.007**

Note. ANCOVA = Analysis of Covariance. Prior achievement, ethnicity, English proficiency, gender, and socioeconomic status were used as covariates. ***$p < .001$. **$p < .01$.

The means, adjusted means, *F*-values, and effect sizes related to the ANCOVAs are shown in Table 5. Overall, VT teachers' students outperformed NVT students for reading comprehension. Results were statistically significant for Grades 1 and 3. Nevertheless, effect sizes, which show practical significance, were considered small. Teachers who were trained in Phase I and Phase II of the Reading Academy had similar *ITBS* student reading achievement outcomes. More importantly, however, for both

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teacher groups, mean reading comprehension scores declined from first to third grade, and the means were below the national norm of 50.0 for second and third grade.

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Table 5

Analysis of Covariance *F*-Values for Group Effects

on First, Second, and Third-Grade *ITBS* Reading Comprehension NCE Scores

	Vertical Team			Non-Vertical Team					
Grade/Subtest	N	Mean SD	Adj Mean	N	Mean SD	Adj M	*F*-Value	*F* Prob.	Effect Size
Grade 1									
Comprehension	1477	54.1 19.8	54.0	3987	51.3 19.5	51.4	22.05	.000***	.004
Grade 2									
Comprehension	1668	47.8 19.8	46.9	4499	45.8 19.9	46.1	2.68	.102	.000
Grade 3									
Comprehension	1662	44.9 19.3	43.7	4334	42.0 19.0	42.5	7.24	.007**	.001

Note. M = Mean. Adj M = Mean adjusted for group differences on prior achievement, ethnicity, gender, English proficiency, and socioeconomic status. ***$p < .001$. **$p < .01$. Effect sizes based on Eta squared were considered small.

Student outcomes for cohort groups. A longitudinal analysis was conducted for a cohort of third grade students. Students (N=6,523) who were included had *ITBS* reading

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comprehension scores for Spring 1996 (first grade pretest), for Spring 1997 (end of first Dallas Reading Plan year) and Spring 1998 (end of second Dallas Reading Plan year). Comparisons were made for all students, for students who had Spring 1996 reading comprehension scores below the 50th percentile, and for students who had Spring 1996 reading comprehension scores below the 20th percentile. Results, displayed graphically in Figure 2, show that in reading comprehension the entire cohort showed a loss of 4 NCEs in 1997 and an additional 5 NCEs in 1998. The downward trend in scores may be related to an increased emphasis on higher order thinking and reading fluency required by the *ITBS* reading comprehension test in second and third grade. In contrast, students who had pretest scores below the 20th percentile (N=854) gained 13 NCEs in second grade and low only 3 NCEs in third grade. Scores for all students with a pretest below the 50th percentile (N=3,098) remained relatively stable across the years. Gains for lower achieving students may be partially accounted for by regression to the mean.

Figure 2. Three year mean *ITBS* reading comprehension scores for a cohort of third grade students (1998) who were tested in 1996 and began the Dallas Reading Plan in second grade (1997).

Findings in Table 6 show the growth toward grade-level standards for second and third grade cohort groups. In 1997, grade equivalent scores showed that first-grade pretest scores for second graders were 1 month above grade level (GE=1.9). However, grade level reading was not sustained. By the end of second grade, students read 2 months below grade level (GE=2.6), and they gained only 7 months, which is 3 months

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short of the expected yearly average of 10 months. Further decline occurred in third grade. Students read 5 months below grade level (GE=3.3), and they gained only 6 months—4 months less than the expected average for a year.

Table 6

ITBS Reading Comprehension Cohort Results

Grade	Grade Level GE	1997 Mdn GE	1998 Mdn GE	Months Above (+) Below (-) Grade Level 1998	Mdn Gain	Months Above (+) Below (-) 1 Year Gain
2	2.8	1.9	2.6	-0.2	0.7	-0.3
3	3.8	2.7	3.3	-0.5	0.6	-0.4

Note. GE = Grade equivalent. Average yearly gain in grade equivalents is 10 months (1.0). Scores below grade-level and yearly-growth expectations are shaded.

ITBS and SABE cross-sectional results for students. Cross-sectional results shown in Table 7 were mixed. Kindergarten and second-grade students' performance remained constant from 1997 to 1998, except for slight mean NCE changes (< 1 NCE). First graders had the greatest gains (Mdn NCE gain = 2.7, Mdn GE gain = 0.1). Third-graders, on the other hand, lost ground (Mdn NCE gain = -1.7, Mdn GE gain = -0.2). Overall, median GEs showed that students' reading achievement declined across the years. In kindergarten and first grade, students performed at or above grade

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level-expectations. By the end of second grade students, at the median, read two months below grade level, and, at the end of third grade, the median grade equivalent was seven months below grade level. In contrast, bilingual education students showed small positive gains. Gains above zero indicated that students, on the average, gained slightly more than one year in reading. Median NCE scores for Grades 1-3, respectively, were 61.0, 55.3, and 56.4; thus, in 1998 all comparison groups performed above the national norm of 50.0.

Table 7

Cross-Sectional Results for Grades K-3 *ITBS* and *SABE* Reading Comprehension:

All Students Tested

	1998	Mean NCE			Median NCE			Median GE		
Grade	N	1997	1998	+/-	1997	1998	+/-	1997	1998	+/-
ITBS										
K[a]	8,773	53.1	52.4	-0.7	53.2	53.2	0.0	K.9	K.9	0.0
K[b]	8,758	53.1	53.5	0.4	52.6	52.6	0.0	K.9	K.9	0.0
Grade 1	9,451	50.0	50.8	0.8	48.4	51.1	2.7	1.8	1.9	0.1
Grade 2	9,522	46.2	45.4	-0.8	45.2	45.2	0.0	2.6	2.6	0.0
Grade 3	9,396	43.7	41.0	-2.7	41.3	39.6	-1.7	3.3	3.1	-0.2
SABE										
Grade 1	3,031	59.0	60.4	1.4	61.0	61.0	0.0	-	-	-

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Grade 2	2,243	52.2	53.6	1.4	55.3	55.3	0.0	-	-	-
Grade 3	1,674	53.5	55.4	1.9	53.7	56.4	2.7	-	-	-

Note. Results included students who were enrolled the fifth six weeks and tested. Grade equivalent scores are not available for *SABE*.

[a]Vocabulary subtest.

[b]Word Analysis subtest.

Progress toward the goal. *ITBS* grade equivalent distributions illustrated in Figure 3 show that in 1998, 70% of the Dallas third graders still read below grade-level expectations as measured by *ITBS* reading comprehension subtest (GE < 3.8). Further, the below grade level percentage was 3% more than for 1997. Even though extensive resources were invested in teacher training, the percentage of below grade level readers remained critically high.

Figure 3. Distribution of 1997-1998 *ITBS* grade equivalent scores for reading comprehension.

Continuous Improvement Through Redesign

A system is in place in the district to provide overall program quality management. Continuous improvement efforts are guided through input from regular meetings with the nine subdistrict superintendents, the Principal's Advisory Committee,

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and a Steering Committee composed of business partners, community members, and other key stakeholders. The Steering Committee is charged with reviewing program progress and making recommendations related to mid-course adjustments. Throughout the 1997-98 school year, constituencies reviewed formative evaluation data. Based on findings, business and community leaders, in particular, were convinced that the present delivery system and training model was inadequate to reach the district's goal for student achievement. They recommended the development of a quasi-corporate approach to training modeled after highly successful "performance enhancement models" used in businesses to keep high-level executives and Ph.D.-level professionals on the leading edge of their profession. Preliminary ideas were generated by various constituent groups to guide the redesign of the training model.

Redesign process. Key phases of the redesign process were planning, designing, and development. The assistant superintendent, Dr. Robert Cooter, and reading department personnel guided the preliminary planning by determining the project scope, defining roles and responsibilities, and identifying the logistics for delivery. The training model was based on the premise that administrators, teachers, librarians, aides, and parents all need to be trained in order to help effect change for students. The existing network of Lead Reading Teachers (LRTs) provided the logical conduit for instructional training and in-class coaching. These experts, along with university professors, provided a means to deliver instruction to an initial cohort of approximately 500 reading teachers and a cadre of principals and parent-leaders from low-performing elementary schools. In subsequent years, additional cohort groups will be trained. Based on the corporate model,

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the goal for the revised Reading Academy was to deliver 90 hours of professional development for teachers in a graduate course format. The curriculum would focus on balanced reading instruction and follow-up coaching sessions. Concurrently, a Principals Reading Academy would provide a year-long focus on the management of a schoolwide reading program. Parent leaders would attend selected seminars with their principals to gain knowledge about literacy instruction in their home schools.

Reading Academy. Phase I of the Reading Academy model, as shown in Figure 3, provides a course in balanced reading instruction for grades K-3 Vertical Team teachers. The course serves as both a staff development opportunity and an opportunity for teachers interested in seeking to further their education. The two, three semester hour graduate credit courses may be applied to a graduate degree at any of five participating universities. The course will be taught by LRTs, university professors, and credentialed district administrators. Vertical Team teachers, who will be selected by principals, must agree to complete all course requirements in order to receive tuition, textbooks, and a $500 yearly stipend. Other teachers in Title I schools will participate in Phase II campus study groups led by the LRTs and VT teachers.

K-3 Reading Academy Training Model *"An incremental model for change"*
Phase I Vertical Team members (1 teacher each from K, 1, 2, 3)

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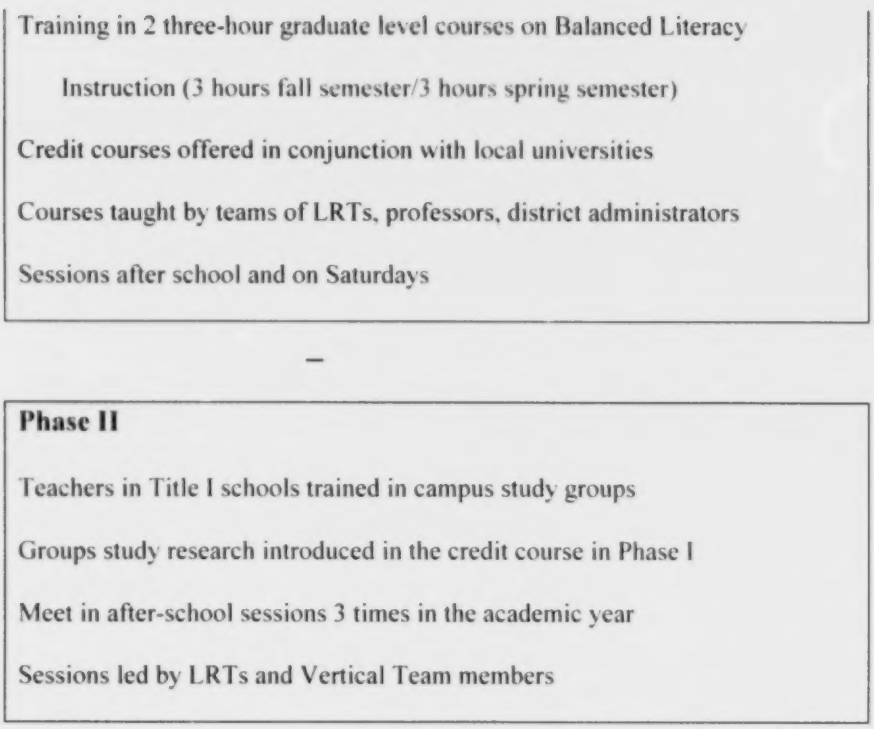
Training in 2 three-hour graduate level courses on Balanced Literacy Instruction (3 hours fall semester/3 hours spring semester)
Credit courses offered in conjunction with local universities
Courses taught by teams of LRTs, professors, district administrators
Sessions after school and on Saturdays
Phase II
Teachers in Title I schools trained in campus study groups
Groups study research introduced in the credit course in Phase I
Meet in after-school sessions 3 times in the academic year
Sessions led by LRTs and Vertical Team members

Figure 3. Redesigned training model for the Dallas Reading Plan.

Achieving administrative "buy-in." Once the Reading Academy design was complete, the next step involved identifying a process for achieving administrative "buy-in" for the training model. In spring 1998, a series of nine Principals Academies were conducted to present the innovative professional development model to the district's area superintendents and principals. Principals were given an update on the current status of reading achievement in the district and short-term goals for reading were identified-over the next six semesters, the K-3 above grade level rate on the *ITBS* must increase by 15% each semester to reach the district's goal by the year 2001 (i.e., 90% of K-3 students reading at grade level).

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After a review of the proposed training model, principals were asked to consider multiple sources of data to select teachers who would benefit most from the training. Suggested data sources included teacher evaluation results, classroom observations, anecdotal evidence, and teachers' Classroom Effectiveness Indices (CEIs). CEIs, based on the district's school accountability system, provide a measure of teacher effectiveness with a specific group of students. (For information on the regression and HLM model used to compute CEIs refer to Webster, Mendro, Orsak, & Weerasinghe, 1997; Bembry, Weerasinghe, & Mendro, 1997). The indices provide a measure in which major determinants of student results outside the control of the teacher have been accounted for. Specifically, results are adjusted for ethnicity, language proficiency, gender, socio-economic status, and beginning level of student performance. CEIs are relative measures set to a mean of 50 for the district; thus, an index of 50 means that students are progressing at expected levels. An index above 50 means that students are performing above the level of similar populations (i.e., similar in important characteristics and initial achievement). An index below 50 means that students are performing below the level of similar populations. Each principal was provided quintile distributions for his/her teachers' CEIs in order to identify the lowest-to-highest performing teachers.

Principals were asked to return to their schools, present the Reading Academy model to their teachers, and to submit the names of teachers who would attend in 1998-99. When selecting participants for the proposed training, principals were asked to consider the following teacher qualifications: (a) moderate to low student achievement,

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(b) at least three years of teaching experience, (c) ability to provide team leadership for the school, (d) demonstrated commitment to effective planning and teaching methods, (e) working knowledge of computer applications for reading, (f) effective oral and written communication skills, and (g) willingness to participate.

Curricular development. Based on overridingly positive responses to the training model by district and school-level administrators and teachers, the Reading Academy proceeded into the curricular development stage. Five universities in the metroplex area agreed to partner with the Dallas Public Schools in the Reading Academy. The universities include the University of North Texas, Southern Methodist University, University of Texas at Arlington, Texas Woman's University, and Texas A & M University-Commerce. Beginning in May of 1998, a series of curricular development sessions were held. A total of 23 university professors, LRTs, multilingual/multicultural specialists, and district administrators collaborated to outline the course content and to select the required textbooks. Course topics and classroom implementation goals are outlined in Table 8 for the first semester.

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Table 8

Schedule of Topics for the K-3 Reading Academy First Semester Course

Session	Topic	Implementation Goal
1	Classroom organization	Organize classroom; develop a schedule
2	Learning environment	Create 5 simple literacy centers in the classroom
3-4	Reading process	Attend reading conference
5	Reading assessment	Administer Dallas Literacy Profile (DLP)
6	Use data to plan instruction	Form needs-based groups based on DLP
7	Guided reading	Plan and implement Shared Reading to model cueing
8	Running Records	Administer, analyze, & interpret Running Records
9	Guided reading	Determine instructional reading level for students
10	Guided reading	Plan guided reading based on instructional level
11	Decoding print	Plan and implement word wall and decoding strategy
12	Writing and decoding	Determine writing stages, implement interactive lessons
13	Language proficiency	Implement oral retelling lesson in classroom
14	Reconsidering views/theories	-

The course focuses on effective classroom strategies for assessing each child's development in reading and other literacy areas, profiling class needs and abilities,

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selecting books and materials for a balanced literacy approach, research-proven strategies for teaching reading, alternative methods for grouping and other organizational strategies, methods of addressing the needs of speakers of other languages, and "targeted" strategies for meeting the needs of children who are not responding well to instruction. Relatedly, there will be a weekly "Implementation Goal" for all participants. Cognitive coaching by a network of 37 LRTs at this phase ensures that reading strategies are implemented in a developmentally appropriate manner in the classroom. The role is to coach and demonstrate until teachers are comfortable with the new practice, and then to sign off on the implementation goal written in the graduate course. Textbooks for the course include *Guided Reading* (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), *Teaching Children to Read: From Basals to Books* (Reutzel & Cooter, 1996), *Balanced Reading Strategies and Practices: Assessing and Assisting Readers with Special Needs* (Reutzel & Cooter, 1999), and *Between Words: Access to Second Language Acquisition* (Freeman & Freeman, 1994).

In the fall of 1998, the first cohort of teachers enrolled and attended the initial session. Thirty sections of the course were scheduled to accommodate 425 grades K-3 teachers who enrolled for the first semester. Because of the large bilingual population in the district, one-fifth of the academy sessions are designated for bilingual teachers with coaching by bilingual LRTs. The participants in these sections complete implementation goals that reflect the needs of English language learners. To ensure accountability, teachers are required to reimburse the Dallas Public Schools for any accrued course fees or expenses if the teacher is dropped or resigns from the Reading Academy, or the teacher makes less than "C" during the academic year. Evaluation data on the effectiveness of

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the academy will be collected throughout the 1997-98 school year; however, initial responses to the training model suggest that the approach has the potential for effecting positive instructional and learning outcomes in the district.

Principals Reading Academy: The Southwestern Bell Fellowship. A widely held view is that for meaningful change to occur in schools via staff development one must be sure to include the principal as the building leader. Implicit in the principalship is the notion that they serve as the chief curriculum leader. Hence, for one to fully live up to the title of "principal teacher" in an elementary school a full knowledge of trends and issues in reading/literacy instruction is a necessary credential. In the fall of 1998, the Southwestern Bell (SWB) Fellowship was developed for specially selected elementary principals from lower performing campuses in the Dallas Public Schools (i.e., low reading achievement). The SWB "fellows" participate in a year-long seminar series focusing on the management of successful schoolwide balanced reading programs (Reutzel & Cooter, 1999, in press). The academy was made possible through supportive funding by Southwestern Bell. The objectives of the program are:

To establish a cadre of elementary principals to learn about, establish, and manage effective schoolwide literacy programs.

To establish a concomitant cadre of parents, one per school as a parent-leader and learning partner to attend selected seminar sessions with their principals and gain valuable information regarding literacy instruction reforms pertinent to their home school.

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To help these Southwestern Bell Fellows and their parent leadership partner understand in detail the significance of Governor Bush's Reading Initiative, the Dallas Reading Plan, and their role in improving literacy instruction in their schools.

To bring together Southwestern Bell Fellows and highly successful elementary principals and teachers for information sharing and problem-solving relative to establishing building-level leaders primarily through graduate education.

To provide incentives for the selected principals for continuing to develop their skills as building-level leaders primarily through graduate education.

The Principals Academy focuses primarily on balanced reading instruction for grades K-6 and is intended to serve both as a staff development option and an opportunity for principals interested in furthering their education. Participants receive three graduate hours credit which can be applied to an advanced degree at partner university. Unlike most other graduate courses, principals are able to (a) benefit from collaboration with other principals in literacy-related problem solving and other constructive exercises, (b) have access to special funding and training opportunities for their school, and (c) have advance access to the Reading Academy course content (in summary form) presented to their own K-3 teachers involved in the program. Topics presented and discussed by the principals are listed in Table 9.

Table 9

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Topics for the Principals Academy: Southwestern Bell Fellowship

Seminar Topic
Principles of Balanced Literacy
Disaggregation of Data for Decision making
Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, & Phonics
Research, Programs, Approaches (Reutzel & Cooter, 1999, in press)
Guided Reading Instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996)
Creating Effective Leaning Environments
Small Group Instruction
TAAS Prep That Makes Sense (state-mandated minimum competency test preparation)
The Reading Recovery Program
Effective Higher Order Comprehension Strategies for Reading
Involving Families & Volunteers

Conclusions and Implications

In 1997-98, the existing delivery system and training model for the *Dallas Reading Plan* was modified to ensure that all teachers received training. Ongoing training was delivered to VT teachers, principals, and librarians in Phase I and to other teachers and aides in a condensed format in Phase II. Participants rated the training highly, and data from teacher self-reports, principals' perceptions, and classroom observations indicated that teachers integrated many of the instructional methods into

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their classroom practices. Even though instructional changes occurred, there was a great deal of variance in the quality of instruction delivered by individual VT and NVT teachers. Furthermore, district student achievement data showed several disturbing trends. First, student reading outcomes, which were comparable for VT and NVT teachers, declined from first to third grade. Second, median grade equivalent gains for cohort groups showed that first graders made expected gains, but gains for second and third graders were 3 to 4 months below the expected average of 10 months. Third, about 70% of the third graders read below grade-level expectations—thus, in two years, little progress was made toward the goal of "all students reading on grade level."

Although progress toward the student achievement goal was limited, there were other signs of success. First, the existing Reading Academy training model enabled the majority of K-3 teachers to receive a consistent message on critical instructional methods. Large numbers of teachers, principals, librarians, and aides benefited from training that was rated highly by participants. Furthermore, classroom observational data showed that teachers used many of the instructional methods in their classroom practices (e.g., skills instruction, developmental comprehension, shared reading, read alouds, and guided reading). In particular, first- and third-grade teachers moved toward small-group instruction, and there was an increased emphasis on providing time for student reading. Moreover, the training model provided a mechanism to build cross-grade level collaboration and an exchange of ideas about reading. Principals indicated that teachers were, indeed, more reflective about their practice and were more open to new ideas and methods. Anecdotal evidence revealed successes occurring on individual campuses, in

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individual classrooms, and with individual children learning to read. The 1997-98 Reading Academy achieved a degree of success in imparting knowledge to a large number of teachers, but principals, LRTs, and program evaluators reported that the instruction in many classrooms was inadequate. In short, many Dallas teachers still need intensive training with ongoing feedback so that effective instructional methods are embodied in classroom practice.

The redesigned delivery system and training model for the *Dallas Reding Plan* attempts to meet the literacy challenge by providing a professional development approach that extends current thinking about school-based professional development, school-university partnerships, and university coursework in reading. The Reading Academy model for teachers is unique in several ways: (a) teachers are selected to participate based on identified needs and commitment to growth; (b) as an incentive to participate, teachers receive tuition, books, a $500 stipend, and a valued leadership role; (c) the corporate-like model delivers 90 hours of ongoing training focused on theory, methods, and practical classroom applications; (d) following weekly instructional sessions, LRTs provide one-on-one coaching to help teachers achieve classroom implementation goals; (e) the coursework is provided by university professors and Dallas Public Schools "expert practitioners" working as instructional partners; and (f) teachers can apply their professional development investment toward an advanced degree. Because the Reading Academy is an "incremental model of change," all teachers cannot participate in the first year. Additional teacher cohorts will be trained in subsequent years. To compensate for the training gap, ongoing support will be provided for all K-3

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teachers in the district through campus-level study groups and LRT services as well as district workshops on selected reading topics.

The Principals Reading Academy, likewise, is an innovative collaboration among public schools, universities, families, and the business community. The fellowship was established because lasting change will not occur at the building level without the informed consent and active support of principals. This unique approach (a) enables administrators to learn effective literacy methods simultaneously with their teachers, (b) offers an overview of the basic tenets of balanced literacy, (c) outlines how to establish effective building-wide literacy programs, (d) enlists parent-leaders to support literacy in their home schools, (e) provides graduate-level credit that administrators can apply toward an advanced degree, and (f) allows principals to benefit from ongoing collaboration with their colleagues.

The reading problem in Dallas, as with other urban districts, impacts students' ability to achieve success in school, to communicate with others, and to have opportunities for future success. Reading fluency for eight-year olds has become a national goal. Experts across the country concur that students should be reading independently by the end of the third grade. When students fail to achieve that level of literacy in the third grade, they are handicapped in most subject areas and begin to fall behind their peers. Unquestionably, the quality of teaching impacts a student's ability to read. Sustained, intensive professional development for principals and teachers holds the best promise for achieving on-grade-level reading for Dallas students. The redesigned

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Reading Academy provides a means to give sustained support for teachers so that each child learns to read well. In the first few months of implementation, Lead Reading Teachers report more visible and substantive change than they have seen in the previous two years of working in Dallas schools. In essence, the success of the *Dallas Reading Plan* unfolds through the successes on individual elementary campuses as individual principals, teachers, and parents provide effective learning experiences for each child.

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Appendix A

Program Observation Form

Appendix B

Definitions of Codes Used for

Program Observation Form

Definitions of Codes Used for

Program Observation Form

Code Category	Definition
Configuration/Grouping	
Whole Class	The whole class or at least 3/4 of the class are working together.
Small Group Pairs	Students are involved in teacher-directed small-group instruction, group projects, or group tasks.
Independent individual	Student(s) are working independently, or a teacher-tutor is working independently with a student.
Teacher Activity	
Presenting Content/ Developing Strategies	The teacher is presenting academic content to students or developing student thinking strategies. This includes *lecture*, *demonstration*, *explanation*, and *modeling* of the content or strategies
Student Presentation	One of several students presents to the class for more than one minute. The

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	presentation is planned ahead of time.
Monitoring Student Seatwork	Students are working at desks individually on content-centered activities. Teacher works briefly with individual students or monitors from the desk.
One-on-One Instruction	The teacher provides direct, individualized instruction with one student for more than three minutes. A "mini-lesson" is presented in order to achieve a specific instructional objective.
Checking Grading	Teacher and students are going over seatwork problems, a quiz, or an assignment for the purpose of checking/grading. Little or no explanation.
Testing/Assessment	Students work independently on a test, quiz, or readiness test. Teacher administers a test or conducts individual/small-group assessment.
Discipline/ Behavioral	The teacher presents or reviews classroom procedures or rules. Teacher gives the class extensive feedback on their behavior or discusses behavior problems.
Non-academic Activity	This category involves procedural/administrative activities, waiting time, and other non-academic activities.

Reading/Language Arts Subcategories for Presenting Content/Developing Strategies

Skill Instruction and Practice	Skill instruction or practice that consists of decoding (application of letters/sound knowledge), letter/sounds, rhyming, phonemic segmentation, structural analysis (prefixes, suffixes, compound words, contractions, syllabication), vocabulary/word meaning, spelling, grammar, and study skills (alphabetization, table of context, etc.)
Direct Comprehension: Procedural	For procedural instruction, the teacher emphasizes procedures or routines for understanding, deriving correct answers.
Direct Comprehension: Developmental	Developmental instruction usually involves higher-order thinking. The teacher verbalizes thinking processes. It may also include

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	demonstration/modeling, examples, analogies, semantic mapping, story grammar, graphic organizers, and simulation.

Continued

(Appendix B Continued)

Code Category	Definition
Directed Reading: Guided	Directed reading involves text-based comprehension. For Guided Reading, the teacher works with a small group of students with similar reading levels (instructional level reading). The teacher accesses prior knowledge, elicits predictions, explores concepts, language, vocabulary, and facilitates comprehension as he/she guides students through a story, article, book, etc.
Directed Reading: Other	"Other" types of directed reading occur in a whole-class setting. The teacher guides students through a story, article, book, etc.
Teacher Read Aloud	The teacher models fluent reading by reading aloud from appropriate literature above the instructional reading level of the students. Teacher questioning elicits interactive discussion.
Independent Reading	The teacher provides extended periods of time for students to practice reading. The students engage in silent reading of independent level texts to gain fluency.
Developmental Writing	The teacher verbalizes thought processes while modeling the writing process. The teacher and students collaborate and produce a written product.
Oral Language Development	Structured oral language development consists of modeling and teaching correct language usage. Oral language development may also involve sharing time, oral reports, poetry and nursery rhymes.

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Other Types of Instruction	This category includes any other type of instruction.
Shared Reading	Using an enlarged text that all children can see, the teacher involves children in reading together. The teacher explicitly demonstrates early strategies, such as word matching and letter-sound correspondence.

Student Activity

Oral Reading	Students are reading text aloud for at least one minute. They may read with a partner, take turns as a whole class, or take turns in small groups.
Choral Reading	Students are reading aloud as a group, directed by the teacher, using a book or chart. Choral reading must last at least one minute.
Silent Reading	Students are reading text to themselves for at least one minute. This may occur during teacher-led presentations, seatwork, small-group instruction, or at other times.
Writing	Students are responding in written form to the lesson content. May include answering open-ended questions, journal writing, composing stories, etc.
Short-answer Exercise	Students are completing fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, matching, or other recognition and recall level exercises to practice their understanding of the lesson objective. This includes copying sentences, writing single sentences, completing computational exercises, or solving word problems.
Problem Solving/ Reasoning	Students are engaged in an activity that requires an investigation over an extended period of time, analyzing and synthesizing data, using creativity to produce novel ideas, or using multiple process skills.

Continued

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(Appendix B Continued)

Code Category	Definition
Listening and Responding	Students are expected to listen to information that is imparted by the teacher or others. Although predominantly teacher-centered, there are opportunities for students to respond to questions, to ask questions, or to comment.
Interactive Discussion	Discussion is predominantly student-centered. Students present their own ideas and listen to and reflect on the ideas of other students and the teacher.
Computer Activities	At least 2/3 of the students are using a computer lab or a stand-alone computer to practice a lesson objective.
Active Manipulation	The majority of the class or group has manipulative objects to support students' cognitive development and metacognitive thinking strategies. Manipulatives may include counters, tiles, plastic alphabet letters, markers.
Multiple Student Activities	Students are engaged in several different activities at the same time in order to individualize instruction.
Non-academic Activity	Students are engaged in some type of activity that does not directly involve the lesson objective. Either they are finished and have no assignment, or they are just waiting for the next activity.
Other	This category includes any activity that has not been specifically identified by activities 1-12.

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